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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses how to design useful research and scholarship on higher education governance, trusteeship, and the academic presidency, proposing radically altered decision making mechanisms and several research approaches derived from the humanities and social sciences. The paper describes the world into which today's graduates are moving, noting that there is no serious consideration of this world and the adequacy of current educational practices to prepare students for it on campus or in trustee meeting rooms. Successful leadership, meaningful shared governance, and the capacity to initiate substantive change is impeded by stakeholders who come from different cultures, speak different languages, and have different visions of the modern institution and whom it should serve. These stakeholders hold widely varying understandings of one another's roles and responsibilities. On most campuses, faculty members, staff, unions, students, and administrators function within hierarchical bureaucratic structures that compartmentalize information and responsibilities. Suggestions for offering faculty members the ability to meet their commitments to the welfare of their institutions include securing grants to: support research on cross-cultural communication and cultural divisions among stakeholders; examine how institutions would design themselves today; and investigate how states would design an ideal higher education system today. (Contains 12 bibliographic references.) (SM)

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Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

OCCASIONAL PAPER

New Approaches to Research on Leadership and Governance

By Annette Kolodny

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Neither on campus nor in trustee meeting rooms is there currently space for serious consideration of the world into which our graduates are moving and the adequacy of current educational practices to prepare students for that world. These larger questions—about curricular structure and interdisciplinarity, about education for lifelong learning and critical thinking, about the world we're educating our students to enter—ought to be engaging faculty, staff, administrators, presidents, trustee boards, state and federal legislators, as well as community leaders, in ongoing searching dialogue.

Unfortunately, efforts to deal with such issues by leaders in higher education are routinely thwarted by the fact that faculty, administrators, and governing boards represent very different cultures, with (sometimes) radically different languages and vocabularies. These groups often have different visions of what the modern college or university should be and whom it should serve, and their understanding of one another's roles varies widely. Current governance and decision-making arrangements on most campuses exacerbate these tendencies. None of these groups yet recognizes that their roles and responsibilities are undergoing seismic shifts as colleges and universities undergo rapid change. There are no incentives for bold, creative thinking about the future.

As remedies, this paper proposes radically altered decision-making mechanisms and several research approaches and methodologies that derive from the humanities and social sciences disciplines.

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Unfortunately, efforts to deal with such issues by leaders in higher education are routinely thwarted by the fact that faculty, administrators, and governing boards represent very different cultures, with (sometimes) radically different languages and vocabularies. These groups often have different visions of what the modern college or university should be and whom it should serve, and their understanding of one another's roles varies widely. Current governance and decision-making arrangements on most campuses exacerbate these tendencies. None of these groups yet recognizes that their roles and responsibilities are undergoing seismic shifts as colleges and universities undergo rapid change. There are no incentives for bold, creative thinking about the future.

As remedies, this paper proposes radically altered decision-making mechanisms and several research approaches and methodologies that derive from the humanities and social sciences disciplines.

During my five years as a dean of the College of Humanities at the University of Arizona, I worked closely with business, professional, and corporate leaders around the state. I discovered that their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of our three state universities were always informed by the particular needs of their own professions or corporations. Lawyers wanted graduates with better writing skills; real estate developers wanted architects and planners with better computer skills; and executives from the high-tech and aerospace industries said they were looking for graduates who could manage complex information systems anywhere in the world and also speak the local language. When some of these individuals were appointed to the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR), their actual understanding of their responsibilities—in addition to acknowledging the political mandate of the governor who appointed them and following through on their stated intentions to serve the *public* interest—was mediated largely by two crucial filters: first, memories (sometimes fond, sometimes not) of their own college and university experience and, second, the parochial interests of the business or professional worlds in which they functioned.

To be sure, a school's ability to produce graduates with high quality computer, writing, and language skills is a legitimate concern for any trustee group. But when such parochially motivated concerns turn trustees into micro-managers, or when these concerns dominate discussions of funding and resource allocation, or when such concerns slyly insinuate themselves into debates over whether to retain tenure or whether to restructure governance patterns, they skew the conversation away from the more consequential questions about whom we're

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educating and what we're educating them for. Neither on campus nor in trustee meeting rooms has there been space for serious consideration of the world into which our graduates are moving and, following that, a serious evaluation of the adequacy of current educational practices to prepare students for that world. We endlessly debate details but gain no grasp of any larger picture. As a result, most conversations about higher education, whatever their ostensible subject (including governance and trusteeship), nowadays take place in a vacuum.

Therefore, before making any suggestions about how we might design useful "research and scholarship on higher education governance, trusteeship, and the academic presidency," I first want to reduce the vacuum.

I start by describing the world into which today's graduates are moving. Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist Lester Thurow notes in *Building Wealth* that "at the beginning of the 21st century, six new technologies—microelectronics, computers, telecommunications, new man-made materials, robotics, and biotechnology—are interacting to create a new and very different" global economy. In this new economic landscape, "man-made brainpower industries" replace factories and even natural resources as the stable basis for personal and national wealth. Indeed, as Thurow argues, "knowledge is the new basis for wealth," and the entire planet is now being reconstructed around "a knowledge-based economy."

But that is only part of the picture. The technologies Thurow highlights require a certain kind of knowledge—knowledge that is skill-based and essentially technical. The technologies are tools—powerful tools, admittedly—but tools that demand other kinds of knowledge to guide their development and use. For example, are all likely applications of these technologies ethical? And how will these technologies alter the many different cultures and societies that make up our global human family? Such questions are anchored in the traditional liberal arts rather than in the professional schools and technical majors to which Thurow devotes his attention. The need for this very different kind of knowledge becomes apparent when we consider the rest of the global picture. For the world that today's graduates will enter is also a world in which the once-recognizable political alignments of the Cold War have been replaced by

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ethnic rivalries and unstable realignments around religion and nationalism; a world in which the economic competition between a communist east and a capitalist west has been superseded by transnational conglomerates that threaten once-cherished notions of sovereignty and national autonomy; a world in which resource development continues to mean accelerating species extinction and global environmental threats; and a world in which the shrinking availability of potable water, clean air, and uncontaminated soil daily widens the gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots."

My brief schematic of the world into which today's graduates matriculate is hardly exhaustive, nor is it the only description possible. But the inevitable complexity of *any* description we might devise for the coming decades points uncomfortably to the fact that, despite all good intentions, the current shape of undergraduate and graduate education leaves students poorly prepared to anticipate, let alone act effectively, within that world. Let's face it: Today's average college graduates know a great deal about popular entertainment figures and often command impressive technical skills, but few ever question the sources of their information or guiding beliefs. And even less often do our students consider how public views on everything from politics to the impact of global warming—including their own views on these subjects—are mediated daily by private interests such as Disney or Viacom.

Within this context, trustee anxieties over computer skills, writing proficiency, or the ability to speak a foreign language elide the larger question of how we educate students for independent thinking and critical analysis. How do we ensure that students fully understand the fact that a world interconnected by commerce and its by-products (pollution, resource depletion, political alliances, and information) will require international perspectives for identifying and solving problems as well as for gaining sensitive understandings of local languages, cultures, economies, histories, belief systems, and governance patterns?

When the questions are posed this way, almost everyone connected with higher education today responds with the same answer: In order to face the complexly interwoven challenges that confront us both at home and abroad—from racial and ethnic hatreds to quickening destruction of biological habitats—the students we educate for responsible national and global citizenship in the 21st century (the students we prepare for entry into a "knowledge-based" global economy) must be taught to comprehend systems, patterns, and interconnections.

Yet as we enter a new millennium, this focus on interconnections is precisely what the organizational structure of almost every college and university works against. We allocate human and financial resources, as well as credit hours, into discrete (and sometimes competing) entities called colleges and departments. Thus, the kind of comprehensive pattern-seeking analysis I am calling for is thwarted by the fragmentation of knowledge into disciplines and departments, with few connections between them. I know of no sentient trustee, administrator, or faculty member who still believes that *any* discipline, by itself, provides a useful organizational principle for understanding the world. More-

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Symposium Papers

This Occasional Paper is the third in a series of four commissioned by AGB to help the association determine its research agenda. The papers and their authors are listed below. For additional information on the Charlottesville Symposium, see pages 4-5.

No. 41 **"AGB-UVA Symposium on Research and Scholarship on Higher Education," by Brian Pusser**

No. 42 **"Academic Governance: New Light on Old Issues," by Patricia J. Gumport**

No. 43 **"New Approaches to Research on Leadership and Governance," by Annette Kolodny**

No. 44 **"Higher Education's Future in the 'Corporatized' Economy," by James R. Mingle**

CHARLOTTESVILLE SYMPOSIUM

This paper was one of four prepared for the Symposium on Research and Scholarship on Higher Education Governance, Trusteeship, and the Academic Presidency sponsored by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges and the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. The Symposium was made possible through a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. It was held on December 5-6, 1999, in Charlottesville and included the participants listed here.

Bennett G. Boggs	**Special Assistant to the Dean Curry School of Education University of Virginia**
David W. Breneman	**University Professor and Dean of the Curry School of Education University of Virginia**
Joseph C. Burke	**Director, Higher Education Program Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government**
Harvey Goldstein	**Professor University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill**
Patricia J. Gumport	**Executive Director National Center for Postsecondary Improvement School of Education, Stanford University**
James Hearn	**Professor of Educational Policy and Administration University of Minnesota at Twin Cities**
Donald Heller	**Assistant Professor of Education Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education University of Michigan**
Richard T. Ingram	**President Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges**
D. Bruce Johnstone	**Assistant Professor of Education Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education University of Michigan**

over, on almost every campus, exclusively discipline-based structures of knowledge have long been called into question by the increasing migration of both faculty and students into emerging inter- and cross-disciplinary fields such as American studies, environmental studies, women's studies, or—as at my home institution—planetary sciences.

Still, even as faculty research projects and student interests "reconfigure knowledge in increasingly intersecting and polycentric designs," inherited curricular and administrative structures continue to maintain the public fiction of discipline-based majors and minors as the only means for achieving an education. "The point to be made here," wrote Carol Geary Schneider and Robert Schoenberg of the Association of American Colleges and Universities in a 1999 article for *Change* magazine, "is that the rhetoric and curricular organization associated with inherited concepts of 'the discipline' invite students to think of themselves as pursuing a specific, well-defined competence when the entire ethos of the contemporary world calls for the capacity to cross boundaries, explore connections, and move in uncharted directions."

It is these larger questions—about curricular structure and interdisciplinarity, about education for lifelong learning and critical

Charles B. Knapp	**Senior Fellow** **Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges**
Annette Kolodny	**Professor of Comparative Cultural and Literary Studies** **and former Dean of the College of Humanities** **University of Arizona**
David W. Leslie	**Professor of Education** **College of William and Mary**
Thomas C. Longin	**Vice President for Programs and Research** **Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges**
Judith Block McLaughlin	**Chair, Harvard Seminar for New Presidents** **Director, Higher Education Program** **Harvard University**
Margaret A. Miller	**President** **American Association for Higher Education**
James R. Mingle	**Executive Director** **State Higher Education Executive Officers**
Richard Novak	**Director of Public Sector Programs** **Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges**
Barbara L. Perkins	**Director, Zwingle Resource Center** **Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges**
Brian Pusser	**Assistant Professor** **Curry School of Education** **University of Virginia**
Merrill P. Schwartz	**Director of Special Projects** **Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges**
Myra H. Strober	**Programs Officer in Higher Education** **Atlantic Philanthropic Services**
Alton Taylor	**Professor** **Curry School of Education** **University of Virginia**
Michael S. Teitelbaum	**Demographer** **Alfred P. Sloan Foundation**

thinking, about the world we're educating our students to enter—that *ought* to engage us. These are the issues that should be bringing faculty, staff, administrators, presidents, trustees, state and federal legislators, as well as community leaders, into ongoing searching dialogue with one another. But as we all know, this isn't happening. Why not?

Talking Across Cultural Borders. To put the matter bluntly, successful leadership, meaningful shared governance, and the capacity to initiate substantive change is everywhere impeded in higher education by the fact that the various stakeholders come from very different cultures and speak radically different languages.

As a result, they bring with them different—and often incommensurate—visions of what the modern college or university should be and whom it should serve. And they hold wildly varying—even oppositional—understandings of one another's role and responsibilities. The cultural divides may assume somewhat different configurations on different campuses or manifest themselves differently within different sectors (the four-year liberal arts college as opposed to the Research I university); but the divides are no less disruptive, whatever their shape. One newly ap-

pointed ABOR member, having boasted that he was "a hard-nosed businessman" who would "never be co-opted by higher education," signaled in that statement his acute awareness that he was entering an alien culture. What is troubling is this regent's assumption that to understand or to be sympathetic to that culture implied some unwanted co-option or loss of autonomy.

I do not dispute that there may be profound and even unbridgeable philosophical differences dividing faculty and some trustees. And I don't underestimate the compelling competing interests and responsibilities that sometimes motivate them. I am suggesting that the substance of those differences—as well as the possible areas of mutual agreement—are never clearly communicated because the two groups view one another through radically different cultural filters and intend very different meanings even when they appear to be using the same words. A good example might be the popular call for increased "efficiency" in academia.

Faculty members who teach introductory foreign language classes routinely protest that it is "inefficient" to pack those courses with 35 or more students, as is done on many campuses with limited financial resources. The Association of Foreign Language Departments recommends an optimal number of 15 to 18 students, with a ceiling of 20. Their rationale is that students require repeated opportunities for verbal interaction—with the teacher and with other students—in the target language if they are to gain proficiency. The typical three-hour/week three-credit course gives each student in a class of 35 barely four minutes/week of speaking time—and leaves almost no time for the teacher to respond. In a class of 18, by contrast, a number of alternative conversational configurations are possible, and students generally speak more often and at greater length in the target language.

When, as dean, I reduced class sizes in introductory language courses, I was gratified to see that final grades got better, the rates of failures and dropouts plummeted, and students markedly improved their scores on national standardized tests. Teachers reported that their classroom efforts were truly being rewarded because the vast majority of students were now *really* learning the language. For these faculty members, minimizing the failure and drop-out rate while significantly increasing student success constituted the most "efficient" use of their time and talents.

Yet for several ABOR members, for many state legislators, and for the provost to whom I reported, only a higher body count in class was considered efficient—even at the cost of having many students repeat the course (due to failing grades) or decreased linguistic proficiency for the vast majority of students who passed.

In a *cri de coeur* that appeared in the November 5, 1999, issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, James F. Carlin, a past chair of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education and a former trustee of the University of Massachusetts, predicted "a day of reckoning" for an "academy turning upside down." His litany of problems was familiar: "exorbitant tuition, tenure, foolish research," and so on. Familiar also was Carlin's implied solution: "I have been a businessman for over 35 years, and . . . . I think I've learned something about management and controlling costs." Most faculty cringe when they read such language because it seems to imply that a classroom can be equated to a factory floor, and it seems not to acknowledge that certain kinds of teaching may well *have to be* labor-intensive in order to be successful. Yet I've also heard faculty members make passionate comments about "managing" the financial costs to their departments of students who must repeat courses or take remedial work; and faculty regularly worry about "controlling" the social costs of ignorance and limited access to quality education. Indeed, most every faculty member I know could easily have penned, in exactly the same words, Carlin's lament that too many of "the poor are frozen out of higher education, in spite of expanded scholarship programs."

The point is, there *are* points of agreement and convergence, even between parties who hold deeply opposed views. But the areas of potential agreement too often are obscured by the differences in culture and language use (even where both parties appear to be using the same words). In consequence, meaningful dialogue becomes impossible.

Richard T. Ingram, president of AGB, confronted precisely that problem when he attempted to respond to what seemed to him

grave misreadings of the "AGB Statement on Institutional Governance." In an op-ed piece in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* of May 14, 1999, Ingram found it "baffling" that one faculty member "should so misconstrue what essentially is a very clear statement"; and he chided a second faculty member for "egregiously misrepresent[ing] AGB's statement." But as Ingram himself intuited, the solution was to urge "faculty members, administrators, trustees, legislators, and governors . . . to find new ways of communicating with one another and reaching new levels of understanding." What Ingram failed to appreciate is that clarity, accurate interpretation, and mutual understanding depend on shared cultural contexts within which there exists a common consensus about what words mean. (Linguists call this a discourse community.) He failed to understand, in other words, that corporate-leaders-turned-trustees—coming as they do from cultural contexts very different from those of academe—hear the term "shared governance" and understand it to mean decision making without accountability; when faculty members hear that same phrase, they hear partnership and mutual respect.

Unfortunately, the current governance and decision-making arrangements on most campuses exacerbate these differences and contribute to further miscommunication and misunderstanding. The result is an enervating climate of mistrust that turns potential allies into adversaries. To get beyond this impasse, two things will be required: First, as some Native American students in the Southwest are fond of saying to their non-Indian classmates, "If you really want to understand me, you must walk a day in my moccasins." And, second, all of us—trustees, presidents, administrators, faculty members, and staff—must embark on a shared and brave rethinking of both governance and decision making.

Some Possible New Directions. In the early 1980s, members of an ABOR commission on academic excellence said they could not understand why freshman composition courses were held to an enrollment limit of 21. Only when a few regents and some ABOR staff members actually shadowed a graduate student teaching assistant for a day did they begin to understand that it took her a minimum of 45 minutes to read, compose copious written comments, and grade *each* student essay; and that she did this *every* week for each student in her two English 100 sections.

We treat others on the basis of our own assumed "knowledge," but our understanding often is inaccurate, distorted, and incomplete.

Moreover, this was *in addition* to the teaching assistant's time in class with her students and in addition to the time spent on course preparation. (By the late 1990s, that same graduate student teaching assistant also became responsible for routine monitoring of the class listserv and other computer-assisted instructional aids.) Then ABOR members and staff visited the teaching assistants during office hours. There they saw a press of students lined up for every teaching assistant in the large multi-desk room and understood the investment of time required to provide freshmen with the individualized tutoring they needed if writing skills were to be improved. It didn't take ABOR staff long to do the math and figure out that, even with an enrollment cap of 21 students per section, graduate teaching assistants were still doing far more that the 20 hours/week for which they were being (dismally) paid.

Similarly, when I was trying to obtain revenue bond funding for a new campus building for the humanities, I asked a legislative staff member to spend just four hours visiting with students in the tiny janitor's closet that, for lack of space, I had been forced to convert into a faculty office. After just an hour in the cramped windowless cubicle, illuminated by a single exposed light bulb on the ceiling, he got the point.

These are anecdotes, not research. But their details strongly suggest the potential value of research directions derived from ethnography, studies of cross-cultural communication, socio-linguistics, and social anthropology. What these disciplines reveal is that we talk to

and treat others on the basis of our own assumed "knowledge" of the Other; but when that Other comes from a culture different from our own, our assumed "knowledge" or "understanding" often is inaccurate, distorted, and incomplete. The problem is, when legislators, trustees, presidents, administrators, faculty, and staff interact, they do so through a grid of often-unacknowledged assumptions about the identities, interests, and motivations of the other parties. Moreover, they take for granted some inchoate common middle-class "American" culture and believe in linguistic communicative transparency because "we're all speaking English, after all." But as I have argued here, the members of these groups participate in and take their identities from radically different cultural contexts; and speakers mean very different things, even when they appear to be using the same words.

Sensitive as they must be to this potential minefield of miscommunication, some college and university presidents act out of the misguided notion that they—and they alone—can act as translators between legislators and faculty or between trustees and faculty. In most cases, however, attempts by presidents to hinder direct communication between different groups only exacerbates the mutual suspicions and distorted assumptions. And, in the worst cases, disgruntled individuals seek out clandestine forms of communication, an outcome that serves no group's interest.

To their credit, many boards do seek ways of keeping open some lines of contact (if not real communication). The way governing boards currently try to cross the borders of difference is by consulting with representatives from the faculty or staff. Thus, the AGB publication *Bridging the Gap—Between State Government and Public Higher Education* praises one governing board for its "concerted effort to reach out to faculty by scheduling separate meetings with the system executive and faculty representatives . . . before or after every board meeting." I, too, applaud the good intentions behind that procedure; but I suspect these meetings had only limited success. How well informed were both groups about the values, attitudes, or concerns that motivated the other? Did each group possess the same information and data? And had anyone prepared the participants in these meetings to interact and communicate across vast cultural divides?

For all these reasons, I want to suggest that we begin studies of the various stakeholders in higher education (including legislators) modeled on some of the pioneering work begun by John Gumperz in the 1950s on cross-cultural communication; Claudia Strauss's examinations of communicative diversity within groups that outwardly appear homogenous; the work of Deborah Tannen on gender differences in discourse styles, as well as her work on discourse styles in the workplace; and the ethnographic studies of corporate cultures produced recently by George Marcus.

I particularly emphasize the work of Tannen because she has demonstrated the ways in which gender differences cut across all other categories. In other words, within any seemingly homogenous discourse community, gender will nonetheless prove a subcategory of difference. As women increasingly move into all aspects of academic life—whether as faculty, as presidents, or as trustees—their uniquely gender-inflected styles must be factored into any study of governance. Tannen herself drives home the point in an anecdote she offers when explaining how "a woman manager typically downplays her authority" in interactions with subordinates. "This indirect approach," Tannen argues, often works well for the woman in authority—but her male supervisors may not recognize that fact. As Tannen told it in an Oct. 10, 1994, *People* magazine interview: "A woman university president told me about a time a male board member visited her and overheard her telling a secretary, 'Could you do me a favor and type this paper?' Afterward, the board member said, 'Don't forget you are the president.' In terms of getting the work done, this woman president's style of communication worked great. But the male board member evaluated it negatively." As the *People* interviewer immediately understood, "There's a difference between performance and perception of performance."

By recommending research derived from ethnography and cross-cultural communication, I am putting the focus on the actions (and reactions) of *individuals* when they are confronted with those from different cultures. And I am focusing also on situations in which the fact of cultural difference may not even be

recognized by the interacting parties. In this way, my recommendations complement those of Patricia J. Gumport, whose views are anchored in organizational sociology. While I stress an attentiveness to the individual player, Gumport seeks to understand the ways in which *organizations* respond to changing environmental demands. If these research approaches were undertaken in tandem, her emphasis on "system dynamics" and mine on interpersonal interactions would likely produce a situation in which all the stakeholders in academe are alerted to their own deeply held distortions and assumptions about the Others. In effect, such studies would turn all stakeholders into much more self-conscious participants in any dialogue, whether the subject be governance or the future of the curriculum. To quote cultural anthropologist and ethnographer Renato Rosaldo, we would "now engage in dialogue with natives who are both objects of analysis and analyzing subjects."

But I would even go a step further. Beyond studies, I would propose a bold ethnographic experiment in which selected participants virtually did walk for a time in one another's moccasins. That is, I would like to see trustees volunteer to take on the responsibility of a freshman composition course for a semester; and I want faculty to volunteer to live for a time in the world of a corporate CEO and citizen trustee or work as an aide to a state legislator for a session. Similar voluntary role exchanges also should be devised for staff, presidents, and administrators. The reports of those experiences, I will venture, would be eye-opening not just for the participants but also for all those who read about them (or see the inevitable video: "Ethnography in Academe—A Truly Special Edition of *National Geographic*"). This, then, is my answer to the question of what initiatives might be undertaken to clarify and strengthen communication, participation, and collaboration in institutional governance.

Unless we take on experiments of this kind and until we disseminate the resulting data widely, we will never have any success in moving boards toward what James R. Mingle calls "more noble ends." The crucial questions will mean too many different things to the various stakeholders who appropriately should be included in answering those questions.

In the face of dizzying change in higher education, the impulse has been to preserve or adjust decision-making strategies from the past.

Is There a Better Structure? On most college and university campuses today, faculty members, staff, unions, students, and administrators function within a hierarchical bureaucratic structure that necessarily compartmentalizes information and responsibilities. It's hardly surprising, therefore, that they cannot work effectively together to respond to problems or to plan for the future. For the most part, faculty members have little information about budgets, and they don't know the issues that administrators confront or even how we spend our time. For their part, most administrators have long forgotten what life was like in the departmental trenches. And members of every constituency—from students to alumni—bring with them not only conflicting expectations but also expectations that exceed the resources available to meet them. As a result, no group knows how to talk or listen to any other, conversations inevitably work at cross purposes, and everyone—every individual and every constituency—feels disappointed, thwarted, misunderstood, and angry.

Because it is always easier for information to travel down a hierarchy rather than up, the bureaucratic structure itself impedes timely, collaborative, or creative responses to problems. But in the last two decades, the structural limitations have been exacerbated by the inability of all groups—faculty, staff, administrators, presidents, and governing boards—to grasp that their roles and responsibilities are undergoing seismic shifts as all sectors in higher education undergo rapidly accelerating and unprecedented change. Unfortunately, in the face of both dizzying change and structural

inflexibility, the impulse has been to preserve and/or incrementally adjust decision-making strategies from the past in hopes that they will continue to serve present purposes.

Furthermore, given the fact that there are no incentives for bold, creative thinking about the future; and given the fact that no mechanisms exist to invite and reward collaborative creativity between and among faculty, staff, administrators, presidents, students, governing boards, and legislative and community leaders, a cautious incrementalism is the only possible outcome. We see this cautious incrementalism in the resistance to substantive curricular redesign; and we see it in the feeble attempts of boards and faculty to "reach out" to one another.

In an effort to encourage substantive change, AGB, in *Renewing the Academic Presidency*, recommends that governing boards "select presidents who are truly . . . change agents and risk takers." But anyone who understands the various intersecting cultures of academe also understands that meaningful and lasting change rarely is effected through top-down strategies. Moreover, as David W. Breneman, dean of the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia and former president of Kalamazoo College, points out, presidents hired as change agents may find themselves in "an untenable position, since faculty members may have different goals for a president than a board does." I would like to suggest a different approach. In my recent book, *Failing the Future: A Dean Looks at Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century*, I advocate what I call "inclusive team decision making" in everything from policy development to student advising. I advocate a situation in which decision-making authority is distributed horizontally rather than vertically; data and information are disseminated widely in order to make that possible; and well-informed faculty and staff share considerable management and administrative responsibilities with administrators, presidents, and governing boards.

The teams with which I experimented were wholly within the College of Humanities (not universitywide). Their numbers were always so large as to be almost unwieldy—but this ensured inclusivity, with every potentially affected constituency represented at the table. And the teams worked best when they brought in neutral outside facilitators to help them develop useful processes. I should add, also, that the most successful team, the one charged with developing promotion and tenure procedures, benefited from a period of telling their stories to one another. While this wasn't precisely an ethnographic exercise in slipping into one another's moccasins, it came close enough. The candid sharing of one another's prior experiences in promotion and tenure, accompanied by brutally honest revelations of personal professional confrontations with sexism and racism, led to an unusually high level of trust and empathy within the group. As I boast in my book, the outcome was the most progressive promotion and tenure document in the country, a document quickly embraced by faculty ballot.

I favor this approach because it permitted me, as a dean, to act as a change agent *in concert* with a large inclusive team whose members were themselves charged with taking on the role of risk takers and change agents. As one of the affected constituencies, I also participated in the team (or my associate dean did so in my place). The crucial difference was that I participated as a full—*and equal*—team member. I was the dean, but my role on the team was never as an authority figure. I asserted no special privilege. By that I mean that I followed the processes of participation developed by group consensus; mine was always and only one voice and one vote among many; and I placed final decision-making authority in the hands of the full faculty. Every draft of the new promotion and tenure document was sent out by the team to the departments and programs for further comment and input. And, in the end, it was up to all the faculty members in the College of Humanities to vote the final draft up or down.

In retrospect, I think three crucial factors explain faculty members' willingness to invest their considerable time and energies in this kind of shared governance. First and foremost is the fact that promotion and tenure procedures affect every aspect of a faculty member's career. Second, in order to make the task less burdensome, I used my authority as dean to unburden participating faculty members from some small portion of their other duties (including courses and committees); and I put

the staff and resources of my office at the team's disposal for everything from gathering data to typing drafts. Third, I pledged immediately to implement the outcome of the team's hard work. As a result, everyone felt confident that the team's efforts would bear fruit; this was not another make-work committee designed to slow down rather than enable policy change.

My success in restructuring decision making within the College of Humanities was tempered, however, by my inability to obtain more than token rewards and incentives for change. And without greater recognition, I am convinced, change can be only partial because faculty members *will* put their energies into finding prestige and rewards off campus. After all, why would a tenured professor devote countless hours to inclusive team decision making or to the faculty senate at a university where, no matter how exemplary her service record, it will do nothing to increase the measly two percent annual raise granted by her state legislators? Obviously, she would do better to utilize those same hours in completing her next book because the book's publication may garner her a monetary advance, continuing royalties, additional prestige within her discipline, and perhaps even a more lucrative job offer from some other university.

Sad to say, on too many campuses there are actually *dis*incentives in place for the kind of good campus citizenship that allows for change and risk taking. It is a situation against which faculty members and administrators struggle daily. If it is true (as is so often asserted) that a school's values may be discerned in its budget, then today's universities and colleges clearly *do not* value institutional change or risk taking. I have never seen any budget that actually invests in either.

The pressures on all sectors of higher education are overwhelming. But I remain stubbornly optimistic that positive, progressive change *is* possible. It is, however, possible only if two conditions prevail (and now I will quote from my book):

> *First, institutions of higher education require a breathing space in which to ascertain what will be required of them in the next century and a further period of budgetary stability in which to devise radically new mechanisms for revisionary restructuring. Second, institutions willing to embark on this difficult process must be offered concrete incentives to begin and meaningful rewards for success. The need for incentives and rewards cannot be overemphasized. If faculty, staff, and administrators are to participate in good faith, then they must be assured of positive rewards because, essentially, they are being asked to facilitate a set of coordinated activities across campus that may well redefine or even wholly eliminate their areas of traditional responsibility. Individuals can be expected to participate honestly in such a process only if they have confidence, from the outset, that their recommendations are to receive serious consideration. And, even more important, they must be reassured that the entire process is not simply a ruse for getting them to collaborate in eliminating their own employment. My experience as dean taught me that faculty and staff are capable of exercising great ingenuity and creativity in restructuring and consolidating services and programs—but only when they know that they will have a secure place in the new order of things, even if that requires retraining, retooling, or even some reorientation of teaching and research areas.*

In an era when a full 85 percent of faculty members, in the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute survey, describe themselves and their colleagues as highly committed to the welfare of their institutions, the challenge is to provide them with the breathing space and the incentives to realize that commitment.

On too many campuses there are actually disincentives *in place for the kind of good campus citizenship that allows for change and risk taking.*

To meet that challenge, I offer three practical suggestions:

1. Secure a Spencer, Sloan, Pew or Ford Foundation grant to support research on cross-cultural communication and cultural divisions among the stakeholders within academe. Target that research to identify a)

recurrent patterns of competing and/or incommensurate discourses utilized by different groups of stakeholders in academe; b) successful models for addressing and overcoming cultural and communicative divisions, both among various on-campus groups and, as well, between on-campus constituencies and off-campus constituencies (including trustees, legislators, civic and community leaders); and c) a workable language, upon which all stakeholders can agree, that fosters the development of incentives for change and real rewards for successful innovation. Widely disseminate the reports of this research. To accomplish that, AGB itself should be one venue for publishing the research and distributing it to college and university presidents and to board members. But AGB also should seek partnerships with national and local faculty and staff unions as well as with disciplinary organizations (such as the Modern Language Association and the American Studies Association) to publish summaries of this research in professional newsletters, bulletins, and journals.

2. Secure a second grant. Partner with three or four very different higher education institutions in different states. Ask them to assimilate the results of the first grant's research and to assemble large inclusive teams. Then give them all the financial and data resources necessary to take up the following questions: If your school were to design itself today, starting from scratch, what would you want it to look like? How would it function and define its mission? And, most important, how would you move forward to that 21st century institution? What would be required to move change forward, now that you have an ideal toward which you have-collaboratively concluded you *want* to move?

3. Secure a third grant. Invite three states to participate. Make sure that the states are significantly different from one another (in terms of educational facilities, population demographics, size and wealth, urban vs. rural and suburban components, etc.). Provide these states with all the information and data gathered through the grants mentioned above. Again, ask each state to assemble large, inclusive teams. Then ask the teams in each state to work together to address the following questions: If your state were to design its ideal higher education system today, starting from scratch, what would it look like and how would it function? What would constitute its different components and how would they interact? What would the curricula look like? How would decisions be made? Then ask the teams to consider further how all the constituencies in the state might be mobilized to move these changes forward. What rewards and incentives might be put in place to get these various constituencies to buy into change and take ownership of the process?

Only by asking these larger questions will we move away from piecemeal anxieties over "shadow colleges" that spin off continuing education and distance learning programs, often without sufficient faculty or board oversight. Only by assessing the larger picture will we understand how to respond effectively to today's entrepreneurial environment. Only by examining whom we re educating and what we're educating them for will we answer questions about curricular change and the place of faculty (and student) research. Only by designing for the future will we unshackle ourselves from the unexamined habits and traditions of the past—governance and otherwise.

These are all Very Big Questions, to be sure. But only by giving ourselves permission (and the opportunity) to imagine a better future will we be able to reshape the present as a firm foundation for an academic enterprise that truly meets the needs of tomorrow's demographically diverse democracy.

In other words, unless projects such as these are initiated (and soon), we in academia essentially are being asked to redesign the plane while we're flying it—and without any clear sense of direction. That is a recipe for disaster. ◆

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